DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 166 676 CS 004 674

AUTHOR Christ, Frank L., Ed.
TITLE How Can College Students Be Helped to Read Better? Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Western College Reading Association (2nd, San Francisco, California, March 28-29, 1969). Volume II.
INSTITUTION Western Coll. Reading Association.
PUB DATE Mar 69
NOTE 35p.; For related documents, see CS 004 673-675

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Students; College Teachers; Higher Education; Junior Colleges; Reading Diagnosis; *Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; Reading Programs; Reading Skills; *Remedial Reading Programs; Standardized Tests; Student Needs; Study Skills

ABSTRACT

The report drawn from the second annual conference that was designed to provide professional dialogue for those concerned with the improvement of college reading programs, this volume contains the following papers: "Organization, Development, and Implementation of College Reading/Study Skills Programs: Some Assumptions and Conclusions" by Frank L. Christ; "What the College Reading Teacher Needs to Know about Reading" by Martha J. Maxwell; "What Should We Teach College Students about Reading?" by Loretta Newman; and "How Do We Discover What Students Need: Are Standardized Tests the Answer?" by Jordan Utsey. (MAI)

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HOW CAN COLLEGE STUDENTS BE HELPED TO READ BETTER?

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE

WESTERN COLLEGE READING ASSOCIATION

Frank L. Christ
Editor

MARCH 28-29, 1969

Host Institution: City College of San Francisco
Conference Location: Airport Hilton, San Francisco, California

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VOLUME II

CS 004 676

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Organization, Development, and Implementation of College Reading/Study Skills Programs: Some Assumptions and Conclusions

FRANK L. CHRIST

Loyola University of Los Angeles

I thank the Program Committee for asking me, as President of Western College Reading Association, to keynote this Second Annual Conference of the Association. As I read our conference theme: "How Can College Students Be Helped To Read Better?" I thought of the hundreds of thousands of students for whom the difference between mediocrity or expertness, failure or success, depended upon us, their reading/study skills instructors and counselors. I reflected further that what happens to our students depends greatly upon our professionality — our knowledge and expertness in organizing and implementing effective and efficient programs for them.

This keynote address, entitled, "Organization, Development, and Implementation of College Reading/Study Skills Programs: Some Assumptions and Conclusions," is the result of those reflections.

There are ten assumptions that I would like to examine with you today. They are neither new nor original but like many old and unoriginal thoughts, they seem to have been forgotten. These assumptions are derived from published literature and research in the areas of psychology of learning, individual differences, reading and study skills improvement, counseling techniques, instructional technology, and

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* A bibliography of recommended reading relevant to these assumptions has been added to this speech for publication in this proceedings.

systems design.

Assumption #1: Learning Begins Where the Student Is.

This educational shibboleth is mouthed rather glibly at professional conferences and forgotten under the exigencies and pressures of student numbers, inadequate budgets, and limited course preparation. College students are regarded as children instead of adolescents and maturing adults. Instructors fail to collect biographical data on their students. Diagnosis is often incomplete or inadequate. Personal pre-program conferences between student and instructor are nonexistent. Course objectives, class outlines, student materials, and instructional techniques remain unchanged year after year. The student as learner is forgotten.

Assumption #2: Learning "How to Learn" Can and Must Be Learned.

If academic credit and other indications of importance are given to college courses in speech, discussion, writing, and thinking (Epistemology and Logic), can such recognition be denied to reading and study improvement courses? If learning, both in school and beyond the highest school, is contingent upon skills in time and task management, reading, and listening, can education afford to minimize or omit training in these skills? If the content of traditional subject areas, such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, and grammar is undergoing constant change in this era of the "information explosion" and technological advancement, will students be prepared to cope with new learning if they have not learned how to learn? Learning "how to learn" should begin in the earliest grade and be systematically developed through every level of formal education. Since this is not occurring in our educational system, the need exists for reading and study skills improvement programs — programs that are focussed on learning skills.

Assumption #3: Learning Must Be Meaningful and Goal-Oriented.

Before any learning skill or technique is required of students, its rationale, particularly performance objectives, must be explored. Before any survey or test is taken by students, reasons for the diagnosis and consequences of test performance should be discussed whenever possible. Students do learn better when they understand what they are doing, how they are doing, and why they are doing it.

Assumption #4: Learning How-To-Learn is a Process.

Learning is not just something for students to know about, it is something that they do. It is a dynamic interactivity occuring within students as well as between and among students and instructors. Learning, particularly in reading and study skills programs, is not listening to lectures about learning skills. It is technique rather than information. It results in something that students do rather than in something they know.

Assumption #5: Learning How-to-Learn is Not Always Easy, Nor Is It Always Fun.

For a rare few, learning a skill or technique is fun. Learning is quick. It is self-satisfying. For most others, learning a skill or technique is boring, slow, unrewarding. The "blood, sweat, and tears" of it is repetition, analysis, and change followed by more repetitions, analyses, and changes until the expected performance of a skill or technique is achieved. The fun or self-satisfaction occurs when the skill or technique is used expertly and easily, not in reading and study skill programs, but in the history classroom during a lecture, in a students' room preparing for a chemistry assignment or philosophy test, or at a school desk taking a final exam in physics.

Assumption #6: Each Student is a Unique Person.

One textbook, one set of exercises, one type of activity, one learning sequence, or one instructional method is never adequate for any program in which two or more students are enrolled. A diagnosis of individual needs, aptitudes, abilities and limitations, reinforced by analytical observations of skills and techniques, will move the concerned reading/study skills instructor to explore the possible usefulness of many different standardized tests and surveys, how-to-study manuals, reading exercise workbooks and kits, programmed instructional materials, and audio-visual instructional components so that each student is helped to learn at his own pace, in his own way, and at his own level of ability.

Assumption #7: Each Student Is Also A Fellow Human Being.

Sometimes we maintain a professional posture that separates us from our students. We forget that students have feelings. We play the role of an elite — enlightening,

censuring, rewarding or punishing students as they meet our instructional demands. We forget that every person hides a complex human being who wants and needs our support, our sympathy, our encouragement, and our respect. If we could but remember what we experienced as students and perceive ourselves and our actions through our students' eyes, we would reach out more humanly to help students learn.

Assumption #8: Students Can and Do Learn By Themselves.

Self-directed activities, if they are systematized and rigorously programmed according to a student's needs and abilities, can release the instructor from many lecture hours and eliminate tedious and non-individualizing group drills or exercises. Ideally, the instructor initiates and guides each student during the beginning and early stages of an activity. He also explains and counsels the student as problems arise during his performance and encourages him to persevere at his task. Finally, the instructor, in conference with the student, determines subsequent learning sequences.

Assumption #9: Computerization Need Not Be Dehumanizing.

Occasionally I hear instructors voice their opposition to educational technology and particularly to the use of the computer in instruction and counseling. They lament the lack of any human confrontation or the absence of dialogue between student and instructor. They apparently forget that this same human confrontation and dialogue is missing in the huge lecture hall and in classrooms where one instructor "confronts" twenty to forty students in a daily forty-five minute monologue. Certainly, the computer, no less than the instructor, can be a deterrent to learning. But when the computer is used as a part of a learning system, it can assist both the instructor and the learner through its ability to store, process, and respond to data instantaneously.

Computer Aid to Instruction (CAI), Computer Managed Learning (CML), and Computer Managed Counseling (CMC) can release instructors and counsellors to devote more time to individual students. Before the development of the Survey of Reading/Study Efficiency, a diagnostic CMC program aid, counselors spent many sessions interviewing students to determine their specific needs and many more hours, if they believed in individualized learning, matching students' needs and skill levels with appropriate exercise material. Now, as many as 500 students can take the 144-item SR/SE in less than two hours and get back twenty-four hours later an individualized computer print-out that analyzes each student's

learning strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the instructor gets a computerized group profile enabling him to plan instructional modules needed by his students.

Under development is a second stage SR/SE program in which a student can dialogue via a teletypewriter with a computer to organize and implement an individualized and sequential reading/study skills improvement program.

A final reminder: computers do not replace instructors and counsellors; they assist them.

Assumption #10: Diagnosis, Referral, and Follow-Up Are Inseparable from Learning and Counseling.

The instructional or counseling loop begins with diagnosis which attempts to determine where the student is. Concomitant with diagnosis is feedback, preferably individual and personal. This feedback should be more than the customary point on a graph or a number in a percentile. Based on this feedback, the student should be referred to an activity or sequence of activities for remediation or development. The instructor or counselor monitors and follows up the referral to achieve optimum results for the student and to prescribe further diagnosis or activity. The absence of any one of these three activities -- diagnosis, referral, and follow-up -- severely limits the effectiveness of instruction or counseling.

Conclusion:

Based on the ten preceeding assumptions, I submit for your consideration this professional charge as you organize, develop, implement and sustain your reading and study skills programs. My charge can be epitomized in ten phrases, each of which is prefaced by the exhortation: "CHANGE"

1. ... from theory to application
2. ... from lecture to laboratory.
3. ... from classroom to carrells.
4. ... from information processing to counseling.
5. ... from being teacher-oriented to learner-centered.
6. ... from group to individual.
7. ... from content emphasis to activity.
8. ... from statistics to results.
9. ... from a traditional to the systems approach.
10. ... from reading centers to learning centers.

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What the College Reading Teacher Needs to Know About Reading

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Before analyzing the needs of tomorrow's reading teachers, let us first answer the question, "What does today's college reading teacher know about teaching reading?" Several years ago I studied the characteristics of members of the College Reading Association (4). I analyzed 304 applications for membership and discovered that these professional people typically had been working in the reading field for one year or less. In other words, they had entered the profession very recently. What reading training had they had? Sixty-nine per cent of the members without doctorates reported having had a background course in reading while only 60% of the doctorates claimed to have any course work in reading. About half of the group reported having had some practicum or clinical training in reading. So about 40% of the group had had no formal course work in reading methodology. (Note: Sixty-eight per cent of the group held jobs as reading consultants and I trust these were the ones who had taken background courses...although the relationship between course background and present position was not investigated.) At any rate, this study suggests that a large proportion of college reading specialists are "self-trained" at best and reveals the great need for professional reading associations to provide basic in-service training for novitiates in the reading field.

Since it appears obvious that many lack specific training for their positions, how do people get into the college reading field? In the same study, I analyzed the major graduate fields of the reading members with doctorates and found that they came from a wide variety of academic disciplines, ranging from administration to optometry and mathematics. Most, however, were trained in elementary education, English or educational psychology. Perhaps many entered the college reading

field as I did--fresh out of graduate school with a shiny Master's degree in counseling, I was offered a job in a college counseling center with the stipulation that I was also to teach a night course in reading improvement. Being hungry at that point, I was not about to argue that I lacked formal preparation in reading methods. I took the job.

Although I entered the field many years ago, there is considerable evidence that this is still the route by which many enter the college reading field. That the profession operates like a revolving door is also a reality. Many persons enter annually, many leave annually, and few remain. For example, in the CRA study, I found that only 15% of the group had been in the field ten or more years, suggesting that: 1) either persons do not remain in the college reading field for long or 2) those who have been around for years do not remain as members in professional associations. There is considerable evidence that older persons in the field do join more organizations and publish more, so we can infer that the former explanation may be the most accurate.

Sheldon (1967) reported that in the field of reading research, there are many "one-shot" papers and suggested that doing a study in "reading" was an easy way to get a doctorate, for most of these investigators' names never again appeared in the professional literature of reading. In my study, 10% of the members with doctorates reported having published more than ten papers.

Has there been recent improvement in the preparation of college reading teachers? I'm not sure that we are much further advanced today. Although Junior College populations are increasing at a rapid rate, and the demand for college reading services seems to be increasing, there is not a great rush in our graduate programs for people to train to be college reading specialists. One of my functions at the University of California is to set up a training program for high school and college reading specialists. I am finding that most graduate students are far more interested in preparing to work with the younger culturally different child who needs remedial help, than they are in preparing to help our educationally deprived older students to get into and remain in college. Were we truly a profession, we would be very concerned about attracting new, capable young people into the college reading field, seeing that they are well trained and setting standards for adequate performance on the job.

There is a tremendous current demand for personnel and training facilities to assist the high academic risk student who may get into the college of his choice where he will find the competition extremely rough and survival in college almost impossible unless he gets extra help. To meet this need, many people from counseling, English, or education are being hired (usually with minimal preparation in the reading field) to

provide reading and study skills services for these students.

What training facilities are available for preparing college reading specialists? Gluck (2) sent out questionnaires to a random selection of 200 colleges and other institutions. She received 70 replies. (Does this suggest that reading teachers can't write?) Over half were instructors in English or reading, or training to be. Twenty-one per cent of this sample indicated they had no training or were self-taught; about half had some courses to a Master's degree. She reported that nine of the responding California institutions offer a Master's in reading. She also found that in California secondary teachers are not required to complete a course in reading methods. Forty per cent of her respondents indicated a desire for further training in developmental reading at the high school or advanced level.

Despite the limitations of her study, it does reveal the dearth of facilities for training high school and college reading specialists. These findings are consistent with a study of 56 college reading specialists (18 with doctorates and 38 with Master's degrees) surveyed by Katherine Dever (1) at Teachers College in 1956. She reported that almost half of the college people surveyed wanted additional courses in reading or related areas.

Traditionally college instructors, including college reading specialists, received no training in teaching methods. A doctorate is viewed as automatically qualifying one to teach one's subject. Yet the reading practitioner himself is usually aware of his limitations in dealing with the college student and his problems., In 1960 Strang surveyed 79 colleges and found that about half had developmental reading training courses, but "almost all of them focused on high school rather than college levels." Very few institutions offered training courses identified as training for college reading specialists. This same state of affairs persists today.

What kinds of training experiences would be valuable to the prospective college reading specialist? Several years ago I sat on a committee which had as its objective setting professional standards for certifying reading specialists through a professional association. (It was proposed to certify practicing "anagnologists" defined as those "students of the art of reading" who met the standards of experience and training set by the association.) In debating the kinds of knowledge desirable for a reading specialist, we listed the following: understanding of human development, counseling techniques, learning theory, cognitive processess and motivation, physiology of learning, sensory processes as they relate to reading, children's literature, psycholinguistics, linguistics, English composition and rhetoric, speech problems and techniques, personality theory, statistics and experimental design, cultural anthropology, ad inf. In assessing

how long it might take the prospective reading specialist to complete this, we realized its impracticality.

Obviously, we have had to make concessions to fill positions. Our profession is recognized as necessary by deans and budget committees, but the impossibility of trying to locate, much less hire qualified reading specialists at the doctoral or sub-doctoral level results in the common practice of assigning any interested or available person to this service. Learning about how to teach reading occurs after they have accepted the job.

Prompted by many years of frustration in trying to hire either trained or experienced personnel for the Reading and Study Skills Laboratory at the University of Maryland, I developed a didactic course and practicum for training graduate students whom we hoped to eventually employ to staff our service.

The original training program has been described in considerable detail in a 1966 article in the Journal of Reading (3). Currently the topics that I include in my Berkeley course are:

1. Philosophy and objectives of college reading programs

2. Diagnostic and screening procedures and instruments (tests and other devices for assessing student strengths and weaknesses)

3. Instructional methods and techniques (both group and individualized techniques are discussed)

4. Evaluation of materials and equipment (workbooks, mechanical devices and other materials such as card programs are critically evaluated and tested)

5. Techniques for teaching specific skills including:
   higher level reading skills
   spelling, vocabulary
   writing skills
   critical reading skills
   study skills including listening, note-taking and exam skills, etc.
   textbook reading skills

6. Problems that affect individual improvement including emotional, motivational difficulties, physiological factors, learning style, etc.

7. Establishing and administering a college reading program
(This includes developing and maintaining relationships with other academic departments within the institution, problems of maintaining student and staff morale, overcoming the "stigma" frequently attached to programs designed to help low achievers, etc.)

8. Assessing individual improvement and evaluating the reading program
(This includes topics such as writing annual reports, evaluation techniques including student attitudes, improvement on skills tests, etc., and conducting research.)

In the practicum program, graduate students were trained in the following:

1. Testing and diagnosis of learning difficulties of an individual student

2. Setting up individualized improvement programs

3. Using appropriate materials and equipment and supervising the students' work in the lab

4. Evaluating student progress

5. Preparing and presenting case studies to the staff

6. Conducting research data and working on special research projects

7. Conducting follow-up interviews with students who had been in the program previously

8. Developing new materials (e.g., handouts on techniques for studying particular subjects)

In general the graduate students who took this program expressed satisfaction with their experiences, and we felt they were much better prepared to contribute to our college reading service in a professional manner.

There presently exists sufficient knowledge and theory which can be applied to training college reading specialists to justify special graduate courses in this field.

The opportunity to master these concepts through graduate courses or special programs given by reading associations

such as NCRA must be provided if the college reading specialist is to develop into a true professional.

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What Should We Teach College Students About Reading?

LORETTA NEWMAN

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What should we teach the reluctant readers, the turned off or not yet awakened students who comprise a large majority that the urban community college deals with? What should we teach college students ABOUT reading? I say—at first, practically nothing, because I think we've found far more efficient ways of bringing about better reading skills by making use of many modern contributions from several other professional fields. Furthermore, I submit that the reading specialists' tasks in college today are necessarily becoming inter-professional in scope.

Interprofessional Contributions

For forty years or more in isolated laboratories across the country, experimentally minded educators, medical doctors, psychologists, optometrists, sociologists, and physical education teachers have steadily worked to break the barriers that so many students face in learning. Many more things about the reading and learning process have been learned than we are using to any extent for our "disadvantaged youth." One thing a lot of experience has made clear—these students need as different an approach as we can find. Let me repeat—these students need as different an approach as we can find. They have long ago turned off on the usual approaches. The more different the approach, the more chance to break through the extreme emotional and experiential barriers to education that face this new kind of college student. There are undoubtedly many ways that have been successful for some. The social worker brings keen personal interest into the picture and even without special reading training will reach some turned-off students. A peer tutor, equally untrained, by his

sincere interest can help reach some. The clinical or school psychologist via group, individual therapy, or sensitivity training can make a world of difference for some students' receptivity to learning; but this is expensive! The neurologist can help some students. The endocrinologist can help some students. How many can afford this help? The few optometrists who know the functional visual field are very helpful--for the few who can afford it. Yet, in the area of functional vision, a Texas study involving 160,000 students showed that the need for functional visual training in reading rose from 23.5 per cent to 90 per cent by eighth grade. Functional visual problems seem to be built into the educative process. Children simply need special training to learn to use their eyes effectively.

Can we make use of these advances for remedial readers in the colleges? Yes! But we need a new approach, with specialized personnel. We need a working team that includes an interested educational or school psychologist, a reading specialist, an interested physical education instructor, counseling cooperation, and other instructors who are willing and able to administer and score placement and reading diagnostic tests and who are able to remain largely in the background instead of lecturing or teaching.

We need separate physical quarters for a Reading and Study Center large enough to meet the general or special needs of individual students, as well as small or large groups. Students today need a maximum chance to develop themselves. Impossible? Not at all. Visionary? Yes, for the total number that need it. Practical? Yes, for many more students than we are reaching today.

Many college reading programs are still located entirely in English departments. But can the English departments today make all of the contribution? Not many English instructors have the science background in the perceptual and testing fields to do an adequate job in diagnosis or perceptual training. If these are done, our fine English departments can enjoy more successful classes as can every other department on the campus. In this we would be wise to seek the help of our psychologist colleagues whose training does include the perceptual, testing, and learning theory fields. These psychologists need, also, to be willing to work at being practicing educational or school psychologists. It is time that we do serious perceptual training to sharpen students' learning abilities. The Armed Services and industry are far ahead of us here. They ARE doing it. Why should we continue to pass it up? Perceptual skills are trainable. However, even well-trained reading specialists may or may not have enough training to do an adequate job in perceptual training. A team approach will probably produce better results.

Students

We see three general groups of students today: 1) Some able, eager, self-confident students, 2) a large group of average students, and 3) a rapidly growing group of remedial students who look to the colleges for a magical transformation. For the group of top, already successful students, any technique will seem to work; although even for these, we can significantly widen their skills by upgrading their perceptual efficiency, which can help their brains to "shift gears" so that they are able to accomplish more work, with more comprehension, with more ease, and in less time.

For average students, such training is increasingly important to alert their perceptual abilities so that they can take better advantage of their college educational opportunities.

Perceptual Training

What is this perceptual training? How did it come into being?

Samuel Renshaw, an experimental psychologist, and George Crow, optometrist, over a span of some twenty years of research at Ohio State University, developed a new field commonly called "functional vision." Psychologists have become aware of this work only in fragments since the research was reportedly largely through optometric journals rather than psychological ones. This series of studies was sponsored and financed by the National Optometry Association, which was searching for a community service uniquely their own, one not on a medical level and not just fitting glasses. Today about twenty per cent of the optometric men are specially trained in this field and perform a fine educational service in training people how to see more efficiently and accurately--at least for those who can pay and for the few who learn about the service and its importance.

The Armed Services adopted Renshaw's perceptual training techniques during World War II and have steadily increased perceptual training since that time. Many industries are using it, more all the time.

Educators have as yet made little use of the optometric educational referral service or done little serious tachistoscopic training which can be done on campus.

However, some of us have dug into this field and have found many things that can be used to great advantage in college reading programs. Brief tachistoscopic-like training to increase motivation is coming gradually into use in elementary and secondary schools. But the Renshaw techniques must be carefully and accurately replicated if significant perceptual changes are to be brought about. The techniques are not dif-

ficult but must be followed exactly, especially with accurate equipment. Training is best handled by someone with enough training in the scientific method for respect for precision. For instance, we have found that much better results are obtained from 1/100 second flashing than from 1/50 second, although the difference cannot be detected by eye. A very accurate flashmeter becomes essential.

Some of the Renshaw-Crow concepts include some of the following: Experimental work was undertaken "...to see how far we could extend the skills of average college students with tachistoscopic exposure of digits." It was concluded that "...once skill is developed in the formal process great improvement may be seen in other functions of different content;" for example, "...after even relatively limited digit skill is attained...the indices of comprehension and speed in silent reading will show marked gains...as measured by standardized reading tests."

The importance may well be that there are hitherto undreamed of levels of skills to which students can upgrade themselves, so that an ambitious student rated now as "low" in scholarship might raise himself to normal or high; a student now rated "normal" might enter the "superior" level. Many years of working with college students appears to confirm this.

Renshaw carefully warns that errors in the manipulations of data and meaning of data can be quite gross and misleading.

To continue: The trained perceiver differs from the untrained mainly in that he uses a different set of mental functions. As skill approaches virtuosity, sensory features recede and the process becomes essentially motor. The limits of improvement from training by tachistoscopic methods are undetermined. The control of motivation and the active restructuring of the visual field by the perciever seem to set the limits of improvement through training. Brief exposure forces the observer to see shapes coherently and unitarily, with sub-grouping achieved with the active effort of making seeing a species of handling response. In this process, sensory impression patterns into a more stably structured field with "visual form perception becoming freed from such limiting factors as position, size, and brightness, with characterize the performance of the untrained." This change is a "...transformation analogous to...the change of the tension movements characteristic of low orders of manipulatory skills to the fluent, accurate, and effortless ballistic movements of the virtuoso...Tachistoscopic training is...not a mere memory process, dependent... principally on the frequency of impression." Forms are more easily seen and more certainly seen at short exposure times.

"...in tachiscopic training the kind of result secured will depend...on the proper use of the method, and on the realization that sufficient time and training must be given to extend skillful performance to or beyond the shoulder of the curve

of improvement. When this is done, there is little or no forgetting."

"The tachistoscope is an important training instrument in the development of accurate perception, leading to improved mental functioning in many facets of learning including increased comprehension, quicker reading, and better retention."

A Practical Approach

At Los Angeles Harbor College we have for some fifteen years been quietly, slowly, and cautiously searching the literature, replicating promising studies, analyzing our student's needs, trying and discarding a good many approaches as we went along.

Our advanced college reading skills course was started nearly twenty years ago by two psychologists and a speech instructor. Based upon the Renshaw approach, it was an early success and has expanded with few changes over the years. It was set up for average to better students. Students consistently report back that this was the Reading Center experience that they felt made the most difference in their total reading performance. Pre- and post-tests in reading and subsequent grade point averages back up the students' reactions. We don't talk ABOUT reading—we do things that seem to raise reading ability levels.

We have not had time or situation convenient to do controlled studies on separate elements in our advanced reading skills course, but we have numerous comparative studies that indicate perceptual growth, and we have observed changes in perceptual performance that are definitely not due to chance.

From the consistent results we have obtained over the past eighteen years, from the Renshaw studies covering twenty years of visual research, and from optometric seminars attended, we are convinced of the value of this approach and the promise of practical advantage to college students when the Renshaw techniques are carefully and accurately used. Most of the educational research does not seem to be based upon the above. A careful reexamination of such research might be in order.

The techniques are possible to use in classes of nearly any size. Although we have had better results with classes not exceeding thirty-eight, Claremont College once reported success with a class of five hundred businessmen.

The rest of our advanced class time is devoted to the development of several of the more common reading skills, also approached more by <u>doing</u> than by direct teaching <u>about</u> them.

Some reading skills seem to develop better when they are preceded by the breaking of bad habits, such as habitual re-

gressions, word-by-word reading, subvocalizing and mental hearing, wandering attention, and others. Machines can do this rapidly and almost painlessly. Machines are time savers. They achieve far more efficient results than other methods. They are crutches to be used appropriately when needed and then gotten rid of before the student leaves the Reading Center, so that the skills learned do not remain dependent upon the machine.

With the gradual breakup of many crippling reading habits, more efficient study-reading skills are accomplished, such as phrase reading, thought reading, pre-reading, continuous thought flow, ways to handle vocabulary growth, constant quick check-backs for comprehension, test-taking techniques, ways to review, cross-relationships between courses and personal experience, usable note-taking techniques and a definite study method which we call the "OAR" method, an extension of the SQ3R, geared to our campus, which is nautical since we are close to the coast and are known as "Seahawks." Students need to be taught not only how to analyze and study the textbooks of various basic college courses, but must be given enough practice in doing it to master and overlearn the skills involved. Also, to enable them to transfer these skills appropriately. Flexibility in the use of reading skills requires judgment, which again depends upon experience and practice.

Throughout the course, short two to five minute spot lectures are used in four situations: 1) when it is necessary to introduce a fresh concept or skill, 2) to show the class how their brains and emotions control their mental production (AFTER their verbal performance demonstrates the affected behavior), 3) to show them how to make their brain help rather than hinder them, and 4) to answer questions about what we are doing.

We have deliberately changed our approach to teaching from that of a performer with a captive audience (which is fun) to that of a guide who sets up situations in which students change their reading and learning behavior through fast-moving activities which catch and hold their interest. In fact, the intense concentration needed leads to increased ability not only to concentrate but also to instantly drop into concentration, which becomes another study skill that develops incidentally and can be useful in many areas of living. This approach to teaching is exciting and tremendously satisfying. Our students do not talk ABOUT reading; they DO it.

A well equipped, multi-approach, multi-level, appropriately staffed reading center is highly recommended as an academic student service for all students and departments on the campus. Such an approach would be equally valuable on a two or four year campus. We have used it for graduate students, professional people, business executives, aviators, able students, and remedial students.

The Remedial Program

Many entirely different problems are added when we turn to remediation work. Here we see young adults who range from complete illiterates to nearly college calibre students. Years ago an administrator I knew staunchly defended the students' "right to fail." Some of us were more concerned with the students' "right to succeed." However, if students could not shape up fast, we dutifully flunked them out after a semester, with a shrug of our shoulders and the lame excuse that they were just not college calibre. And so they were not—by the old definition of college students, from a different time, from a different world. We were not very happy about it.

In 1957, the idea of a broad remedial education skills program came up at Harbor. The English staff tackled the problem first. It was divided in its opinions as to the need, as well as the practicality of the idea. Could we teach skills which had been lacking for so many years? Didn't the teachability of skills depend upon basic intelligence? Would students be willing to drop back to elementary levels to pick up skills not mastered earlier? (The answer here turned out to be "yes," provided you do not tell them.) Could changes in long-standing mental habits be brought about? Finally, how educable were students of such low motivation, unrealistic goals, with social, physical, or psychological problems?

The staff agreed upon three needs: First, from the faculty, there was felt need for more student organization and self-initiated learning, especially in the academic areas. Then, from the community, from our college industrial, business, and community advisory committees had often come requests for more mastery of basic skills and increased skills in inter-personal relationships. For instance, one industrial survey of the Los Angeles Metropolitan area was reported to show that seventy-five per cent of all persons who lost their jobs in one year lost them from a lack in job skills. The opportunity to study individuals as well as content and method seemed an impossible challenge. Could we assist them to develop more successful organizational and personal skills? This might contribute to a lessening of an important industrial personnel problem—no less a vital workers' problem. Would this be as important as mastery of basic educational skills? Maybe psychologists should handle it, but could they? Was this a function of education?

We felt that this area would require careful study since, if the project were embarked upon, it would require much extra instructor's time for research and the finding of equipment, materials, and methods. Would this be on top of a full instructor's load? (It turned out that way.) How would the expense of necessary equipment and materials be handled? How about extra counselor's time for the selection and testing of

students? (We found that this would have to be handled mostly by us.) One test score only, a SCAT-verbal score, would be used in entrance testing. Since this has very little to do with reading ability, it hampers both students and staff.

Then we came to the students. How about fitting such a program into the student's already over-crowded schedule? How could we gain the cooperative acceptance of the students themselves? Most of them would not realize that many of their study and comprehension problems stemmed from poor reading skills. Should it be required or voluntary? How extensive a program would be needed? Should we teach students ABOUT reading? Or should we surround them with reading materials and let them "hook" themselves on reading? What would we teach?

A preliminary sociological study of the community gave us an idea of the backgrounds to be expected, the multi-language problems, the ethnic groups, the economic levels. All of them were appallingly varied. Then a pilot study was set up with a small exploratory sample of students chosen from the top five and lowest five per cent of students from the reading course. A summary of results was written up to serve as guide lines for further study. An experimental program based upon this pilot study was next undertaken.

Our reading clinic course has continued to evolve for the past twelve years, heading more and more in the direction of an individualized program contract, based upon the diagnosed needs of the students. Each student works within the limits of his abilities and interests. His competition is largely with himself. He is not pressured--only gently pushed. Once he is hooked, he does the pushing himself.

The program requires an adequate library of varied remedial materials, strong administrative understanding and backing, classes not over twenty-five, and active, enlightened, student support.

What should we teach remedial students about reading? Again the first thing that comes to mind is "nothing." The second question that still comes to mind is "what students?" Do we try to teach all remedial students the same way? The same things? All together? The results of such efforts that we have observed leave much to be desired.

Studies in education indicate that self-discovered knowledge is far more effective and interesting than the direct or interpretive approach that many educators still cling to. The instructors' dependency upon an audience fast loses its appeal once the personality change in students becomes evident as they "turn on" to education as a result of their discovery that they can successfully and steadily read and understand. We do it with a multi-level, individualized reading and study program that is set up for each student's particular problems. This is based upon several group pre-tests used

to diagnose major deficiencies. Then we let the student alone to explore the world of print with unobtrusive, gentle firmness on the part of the instructor, who becomes his guide and friend to whom he can bring any educational (and often personal) problem without fear of condemnation, abrupt or unexplained criticism. After he starts, all changes and problems are talked over with him, and he often makes the decision on the next step or direction he thinks he ought to take. There are always ways to rig the opportunities so that he makes a good decision for his needs.

After receiving his contract, he is given the responsibility of meeting the minimums set up for each activity, with encouragement to go as far above these minimums as possible. After this is set up, we check frequently with the students to praise progress and to modify their activities as their progress indicates, perhaps to do further individual testing if it is indicated. The fewest possible lectures are given, mostly demonstrations of lab equipment. After the lab program starts, we stay out of the way and let him read his way through the course. This is a psychologically sound way to break through the worst psychological barrier of all—that of self-defense. By not trying to force change or learning, he no longer needs to defend himself. By feeding on reading that he can successfully manage and understand, he learns the pleasant feelings of success and satisfaction. Being on his own, he begins to feel like an adult and begins to assume responsibility for his own learning. Some get downright excited about it. We praise his successes every chance we get, then analyze and re-direct problem areas with lots of encouragement. After a while, failure is no longer a problem.

For the remedial student who is far below his more able peers, certain fundamental steps need to be achieved first. We need to let him get his feet very wet at the start. He needs to "wade" for some time in easy, interesting reading material which is at or below his initial reading level. When his self-confidence starts to grow, so can the reading and thinking challenges. Too much too soon turns off more of these students than it helps. Patience and abundant, interesting, adult level material here pays off later.

Some wake up immediately; some resist for as much as six weeks; a very few we never dent. For the other half of the course, the homework, we use a Homework Contract which is fully set up in their lab manual but with a different teaching approach. With the assistance of Federal funds, we were able to start a student tutor program. These tutors were in full charge of discussing the assignments and the Newman Lab Manual, helping with lab problems when needed, and persistently but patiently holding them to their homework contracts in detail. We think that this approach works and gets positive verbal feedback from students and faculty. It is a seventeen-

week practice routine in a reading, thinking, and writing approach to textbook study, spelling improvement, and vocabulary expansion, with as much tutorial conferencing as they need or desire. Some bring in other textbooks that they are having trouble with. If none of us can help them, we refer them to an "A" or "B" student in that subject who is on call as a volunteer student tutor. This is a small, purely voluntary tutor group sponsored by our Student Government. These students give us one or two hours per week to help with a single activity or problem. Some are "on call" for special problems. They are drawn from the service groups, the Honorary Society, the Education I class, and the Advanced College Reading Skills classes. The face-to-face peer contacts are wonderfully effective.

This spring, we are experimenting with an intermediate class to continue the Reading Clinic class but change the emphasis. It concentrates on study methods, vocabulary, and a continuation of reading lab activities. It is elective and aimed at students from the eighteenth to fiftieth percentile score on the SCAT-verbal.

Next fall, we hope to get underway two new pilot studies that we have been doing spade work on for several years. One of our physical education teachers is on leave this year starting her doctorate on a coordinated physical education-reading project which we hope to start in the fall. A coordinated reading-typing study will soon get under way. In the future we hope to expand our functional vision training with the help of the local optometry group.

Is an interprofessional approach an impossibility? Not at all. It takes time. It takes interest. It takes willingness to explore, to go to seminars, meetings, conferences. It takes patience. It takes a responsible and responsive administration and board.

Results

The rewards? We see personalities change from sullen hopelessness, defensiveness, frustration, and failure, to the look of enthusiasm, eagerness, and self-confidence. A shy wondering admission that reading can be enjoyable, that they've read a book all the way through for the first time, that education is beginning to make sense, that they want to go on to higher goals than they ever had before. They begin to ask questions; they begin to want to talk. Our statistical studies show that they grow an average of three and two-thirds years in reading in their four months' time in the Reading Center; one grew as much as eleven years. Some do not seem to move. We still lose twenty-two per cent of them. But of the ones who stick out the semester, seventy-two per cent get

themselves completely off academic probation. Worth the effort? We think so.

To the extent that the remedial instructor is able to readjust his thinking to a course of study operating on individualized learning contracts based on the students' diagnosed needs; to the extent that he is able to provide suitable multilevel, high interest materials; to the extent that he is able to provide equipment for training; to the extent that he is able to be acceptive, unruffled, patient but gently firm; to the extent that he is sharp enough to ascertain and treat individual problems as they occur; to the extent that he has access to special aides and tutors for individuals when they need them—to this extent he may be able to meet many more of the needs of the academically unequipped college students than we are reaching today.

What should we teach college students about reading? I say—nothing. Let them hook themselves; it works.

How Do We Discover What Students Need: Are Standardized Tests the Answer?

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I would like to begin the discussion of the topic, "Are Standardized Tests the Answer to Discovering Students' Needs?" by proposing the notion that we cannot come to grips with the question until we have identified, in some general way at least, what we mean by the phrase, "students' needs."

I shall not try, for it would not really serve our purposes here, to list in any great detail all of the possible needs that students might have in the area of reading. Rather, I would like to propose a classification of general needs and provide examples of specific reading tasks which might fall into each major category.

Parenthetically, I would suggest that specific student needs must at some time be identified as they really constitute our instructional objectives. However, that aside, students' needs can be categorized; and Mager has suggested a general classification of teaching goals which I think fits out particular topic very well and which I have restated as general student needs:

1. The need to know more about something than they knew before.

2. The need to understand something they did not understand before.

3. The need to develop a skill that was not developed before.

4. The need to feel differently about a topic or subject than before.

5. The need to develop an appreciation for something

where there was none before.

The foregoing categories of students' needs have, I think, special relevance for the reading teacher, for it is possible without great difficulty to think of specific reading tasks which would fall under each general area. In the interests of time and space, let me simply suggest an example or two for each general category of students' needs.

One. Under the category of "the need to know more about something," one might list the need to know more about words and their meanings--denotations, connotations, synonyms, antonyms, etc.

Two. Under the category, "the need to understand something they did not understand," one might list the need to understand that reading can be a rich source of ideas; can provide help in the identification, selection, and evaluation of ideas and problems; and can provide data for solving problems.

Three. Under the category, "the need to develop a skill that was not developed," one could list the need to develop flexible reading rates or effective reading study techniques.

Four. Under the "need to feel differently about a subject," one could list the need to have positive feelings about reading. We are all familiar with the difficulty of working with students who have negative attitudes about the reading act. This is particularly true of students who might be classed as remedial; for, as Dolch has indicated, "Every case of failure means defeat to the child, and as a result, a feeling in the child of fear, frustration, and insecurity." (2, p. 133)

Five. Under the "need to develop an appreciation for something," we could list such things as the need to appreciate and enjoy critical and creative reading, the need to appreciate good literature, and perhaps most important, the need to appreciate the notion that reading can be a process of accumulating the experiences of the human race. John Ciardi has put this idea better than anyone I know:

"We do not have time in one lifetime to acquire the experiences and to meet the people we have to meet if we are going to be something like speculative, thinking, sentient human beings...Books give you a

> life you haven't time to live on a clock...If you think you can get to be a full human being without having some contact with the experiences that the race has stored, I think you are wrong. (1, p. 86)

If the five general areas or classifications of students' needs have any validity at all—and I tend to believe they do—it is important that we attempt to provide for them in our instruction. Furthermore, if any of the specific needs within a given category is important enough to teach, then surely it should be worth knowing whether or not our instructional efforts have been successful (4) and whether the students' needs have been satisfied. However, some of the needs I have proposed are not results or products of instruction. They are behaviors. Let me illustrate what I mean by results or products versus behaviors.

If we were to administer a standardized reading test to a student which involved a subtest on vocabulary, one might say that the resulting score which represents the student's vocabulary is a product of all the student's learning up until the time of the test. It is true that the product changes, increasing with further learning, decreasing as forgetting occurs; however, at any given point in time it can be measured with at least some degree of accuracy. Students' needs that fall into the classification of knowing and understanding, and even perhaps various skills, may be thought of as products; and at least some of them are measurable with various types of standardized testing instruments.

In contrast, behavior might be thought of as action, or a state of movement—a student's "moving toward" or "moving away from" responses. (4) To illustrate: one of the common goals of reading instruction is to create within the student a greater interest in reading; we want students who do read and who enjoy reading.

But, how does one measure "interest?" Preference inventories are notoriously weak. We can only observe the student's behavior and the approach or avoidance responses he makes to reading. The student's behavior, his approach or avoidance responses, tells us about his needs in relation to his feelings about reading or his appreciation; and these are not measurable by any standardized test with which I am familiar.

I recognize that in a sense I may have created a false dichotomy in my discussion of results or products versus behavior; such a world doesn't really exist. However, it helps in this instance to speak as if it did, as certain aspects of reading seem amenable to measurement by standardized tests while others do not. Classifying them as products or behaviors helps us visualize the needs of our students and determine which are most subject to evaluation by standardized measuring instruments.

Thus we find that standardized tests may provide certain information about a student's needs. For example:

The need to know a larger number of words.

The need to understand more completely the concepts he already has.

The need to improve his reading rate.

However, standardized tests cannot provide information about the students':

Feelings about books and the reading act.

Appreciation of literature, etc.

At this point we have a partial answer to the question, "Are standardized tests the answer to discovering students' needs?" The answer is, No, not completely--not if we are concerned about a student's feelings about reading, or his appreciation of what reading can contribute to his life. However, standardized tests may be a partial answer. The question we must now concern ourselves with might be as follows: "Are standardized tests the answer to discovering students' needs in knowledge, understandings, and skills?"

I imagine we are all familiar with the values claimed for standardized tests--their reliability, validity, and objectivity. We have all listened to lengthy discussions, and we've all read extensive essays about the validity, and reliability of different tests. And most important, we use them and rely upon them to provide us with various kinds of data about our students. We may or may not be wise in our use and interpretation of results, but use them we do.

However, let us examine whether or not standardized tests really measure a student's needs in the areas of his reading knowledge, understandings, and skills.

Standardized tests most certainly should be capable of measuring our students' knowledge and needs in specific areas of reading, say, vocabulary. And indeed a reading vocabulary test which is carefully constructed and normed is probably one of the best measures available for identifying a student's work in a norm group. (5) Yet we know that an individual's standing in a norm group will be influenced by the relative weight given in a vocabulary test to different subject fields. If a major portion of a given test is drawn from the various natural and biological sciences and math, students with greater reading experience in the behavioral and social sciences will be handicapped, and vice versa. It is quite probable, therefore, that if we want to identify the specific vocabulary needs of our students, we will find the use of standardized tests rather limited because there are few instruments designed to measure the vocabulary needs of students in special fields.

The foregoing illustrates one of the basic problems and limitations of measuring a student's knowledge in reading; that is, the complex nature of the subdivisions of the reading process. When we seek to measure even such a simple appearing

aspect of reading as vocabulary, we are faced with the necessity of deciding which vocabulary. Moreover, even after that is decided, we need to know whether we have measured only primary meanings of the words--the denotations, or whether we have secured a deeper measure of word meanings--connotations, etc.

If the accurate assessment of a student's vocabulary needs is difficult--and it is--then the accurate measurement of his comprehension needs is even more so, again because of the difficulty of isolating the various subdivisions of reading comprehension. Many tests include subsections labeled paragraph meaning, main ideas, sentence meaning, etc. Yet research findings indicate that the attempts by test makers to neatly differentiate among the various elements of comprehension have not been notably successful. The intercorrelations of the subscores tend to be so high that they suggest almost the same thing is measured by different subtests. (5)

This brings us to a consideration of the usefulness of standardized tests in measuring a student's need to understand. Certainly one of the more pressing needs in the field of reading is a standardized test which measures understanding or, if you will, reasoning. Yet we face a very real dilemma, that is, the lack of a clear differentiation between the measurement of reading and understanding and the measurement of intelligence. In reality, the better and more rigorous the reading-reasoning-understanding test is, the greater the dilemma; for high level reading is one form of thinking, and intelligence is expressed through thinking. Thus we face the problem of deciding whether we are measuring reading or intelligence. In reality, we are probably measuring some composite of both. (5)

In any event, it is difficult to estimate the needs of a particular student who scores low on such a test, for we do not know whether the low score is due to a lack of reading ability or low verbal intelligence.

The third use of standardized tests we must now consider is their usefulness in identifying the reading skill needs of students. Here again we are bedeviled in our attempts to isolate and evaluate various skills by the complex nature of the reading process. Let us take, for example, the measurement of a student's "reading rate." We are quite familiar, I imagine, with studies of eye movements, of rate, and of the various and sundry boxes, machines, and strategies designed to improve and test a student's reading rate. This whole area of reading has seemingly been a rich field for exploitation by several types of self-styled experts who promise to improve an individual's reading rate in a rather wondrous fashion. Yet we know that there is no such thing as a single reading rate. Each individual probably has innumerable rates depending upon the nature and difficulty of the material and the purpose of the reader. The speed at which a mature reader moves along

through an exciting novel may be several times that he obtains in the study of a research article in a professional publication.

Thus any test result of reading rate is suspect. What was the student's purpose? His familiarity with the material? Was the test long enough to give an accurate measure of the student's ability? And there are other questions of a like nature, that must be answered before we can be certain that the test has helped us identify a student's reading rate needs.

I have made reference several times in this paper to the fact that due to the complexity of the reading act, the isolation and measurement of specific knowledges, understandings, and skills is very difficult and often fraught with error. There are, however, at least two other problems related to the measurement of reading which also limit the usefulness of standardized tests.

The first of these, like the complexity of the act itself, also has to do with the nature of the reading process. Reading is a process which flows past as you try to evaluate it. Except for a rather superficial appraisal of speed, silent reading cannot be measured at all without either terminating or interrupting the reading. Measurement thus becomes a sort of addition to the process itself. There is no way of knowing, for example, whether a student is reading to secure the main idea, evaluate the author, obtain enjoyment, or whether he is putting his mind to the task at all. (5) All that we can do is ask a series of questions after the reading is completed and hope that the answers will provide some notion about the adequacy of the reading act itself.

This brings me to the second major problem: securing a standardized test of such a length that we are certain of the results. As long ago as 1938 Traxler indicated that, other limitations aside, many if not most of our standardized reading tests are too short for high reliability; that measures of vocabulary, speed, and comprehension are pressed into a forty-minute period rendering subtests virtually useless for the study of individuals. (5, 6) He later stated that oral reading is undoubtedly one of the best ways of appraising the reading abilities of pupils; but since oral tests are individual in nature, they are viewed as too time-consuming for practical use. (5) Gates referred to this same problem in 1965. He was speaking of reading readiness tests and stated:

> During the past forty years, reading readiness tests have been nearly squeezed to death by economic pressure. They must be cheap group tests; we can't afford the time for individual testing. They must be simple to understand and use; our teachers colleges cannot afford to train teachers to learn to use complicated or subtle techniques. And so the cheap, the quick, the simple, and consequently

the necessarily superficial and inadequate appraisal... prevails. (3, p. 4)

In answer, then to our re-phrased question, "Are standardized tests the answer to discovering students' needs in knowledge, understandings, and skills?" I think we would be required to answer, No, they are not a complete answer in and of themselves due to the several limitations I have mentioned.

At this juncture I would like to, in a sense, turn back upon myself. I have attempted to support the notion that standardized tests do not provide an adequate measure of students' needs.

But a critic might say, "But Professor Utsey, we use standardized tests in our schools and they appear satisfactory. Aren't you being somewhat over-critical and unrealistic in your comments?" And this is a legitimate question. If, in fact, standardized instruments appear satisfactory to large numbers of practitioners in the schools, perhaps my observations do reflect an unrealistic and unsupported position.

I therefore conducted a rather limited but careful survey of the reading-testing practices of several pre-college programs in the State of New York. The survey focused upon twelve two- and four-year colleges which have special student populations who are currently receiving a form of compensatory education to prepare them for full matriculation. I chose these select groups of students because one of their major problems in coping with college level work is their low reading achievement. If standardized tests could identify the specific needs of these students, then they would probably serve the general population as well. I asked the people in charge of these reading programs two basic questions:

1. What tests are typically used to assess the students' reading abilities, growth, etc.?

2. Did you consider the tests adequate for your own purposes?

In answer to Question One, the tests most frequently mentioned included the Nelson Denny, Coop English, Iowa Silent, Durell, Gray Oral, and Brown-Carlson Listing.

In answer to Question Two, not a single respondent was satisfied with the data provided by standardized tests. Here are a few of the more interesting comments I received:

Fredonia: "Use of our standardized test unsatisfactory; research data from Pennsylvania Advancement Schools confirm that standardized tests won't do it."

Albany State: Rejecting present standardized tests because they did not give adequate measures of growth.

Cortland: Grades and transcripts more helpful than tests. "Heck of a thing finding something."

As a general summary of the responses to Question Two, there appeared to be agreement among the reading people contacted that standardized reading tests for purposes of placement as well as for the measurement of growth were not satisfactory. They reported that standardized tests are limited in their potential for the population involved. In essence, no one was satisfied with the tests they were using, but they had not explored individual informal approaches.

I recognize, as you must, that my survey was limited in size and to a special group of under-achieving students. Yet the standardized tests utilized by the teachers in those institutions were not considered satisfactory for either placement or measuring growth. If the tests will not provide even a gross measure of growth, is it likely they can identify individual student needs?

In conclusion, then, to the question, "Are standardized tests the answer to identifying students' needs?" my answer is, They are not, and we have a great deal of work to do before they are. Perhaps the answer is partially in standardized tests. Perhaps a wider understanding and use of informal tests is needed.

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